

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4771

INFO USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2946

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS/ AMED PFOR SPON UR US

SUBJECT: MEDICAL VOA ITEM

REF: USIA 5992

1. IN EMBASSY'S OPINION, ITEM ON VOA BREAFAST SHOW MARCH 1-- WHICH WAS ONE REFERRED TO IN PREVIOUS EMBASSY MESSAGE-- DEVIATES SIGNIFICANTLY FROM EMGLISH ORIGINAL. MORE TO POINT, IT IS FACTUALLY INACCURATE REGARDING SEVERAL CARDINAL, AND POLITICALLY SENSITIVE, FACTS AND MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO CURRENT SOVIET STAL IN PROVIDING MEDICAL DATA TO US TEAM NOW IN MOSCOW.

2. ASIDE FROM THE MOST UNFORTUNATE LINKAGE OF THE CURRENT MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE MICROWAVE ISSUE AS MENTIONED IN MOSCOW 2808, THE ITEM CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING MISSTATEMENTS OF FACT:

A. "MEDICAL TESTS OF AMERICAN EMBASSY PERSONNEL IN MOSCOW ARE UNDERTAKEN AFTER EMPLOYEES OF THE EMBASSY EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE FACT THAT THE U.S. EMBASSY IN MOSCOW..." THE FACT IS THAT MEDICAL TESTS WERE BEGUN IMMEDIATELY AS SOON AS EMPLOYEES WERE NOTIFIED OF THE MICROWAVE SITUATION AND WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT UNDERTAKEN AS THE RESULT OF EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN BY EMPLOYEES.

B. REFERENCE IS MADE TO "IRRADIATION OF THE EMBASSY BY MICROWAVES OF GREAT POWER" ("BOL'SHOY MOSHCHNOSTI"). FACT: THE MICROWAVE RADIATION IN THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN OF LOW RPT LOW POWER BY ANY TECHINCAL OR COMMONSENSE DEFINITION OF THE TERM. TYPICAL HIGHS MEASURE BEFORE

SCREENING WERE ABOUT 13 MICROWATTS MICROWATTS PER SQUARE CENTIMETER. EBEN DENSITIES IN THE LOW MILLIWATT RANGE (ONE THOUSAND TIMES HIGHER) ARE PROPERLY CHARACTERIZED AS LOW-LEVEL. INITIAL CONCERN OVER THE HEALTH IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO LONG-TERM EXPOSURE TO LOW-LEVEL NON-IONIZING RADIATION; THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY QUESTION OF HIGH-LEVEL EXPOSURE, AND THIS HAS BEEN MADE CLEAR IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

C. "EVIDENTLY WITH THE AIM OF INTERFERING WITH THE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES OF THE EMBASSY." FACT: AS HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S PRESS SPOKESMAN, WE DO NOT KNOW THE REASON THE SOVIETS ARE DIRECTING MICROWAVE SIGNALS AT THE EMBASSY. IT IS, HOWEVER, PURE NONSENSE TO SAY THEIR AIM IS TO INTERFERE WITH EMBASSY COMMUNICATIONS SINCE EVEN THE EMBASSY'S RARELY USED STAND-BY RADIO-TELETYPE FACILITY DOES NOT UTILIZE MICROWAVE FREQUENCIES.

3. WE ALSO NOTE THAT NO RPT NO CITATIONS OF REPORTS IN OTHER MEDIA WERE GIVEN IN THIS ITEM: IT WAS PRESENTED AS FACTUAL NEWS ON VOA'S AUTHORITY. FURTHERMORE, IT WAS SELECTED FOR INCLUSION IN THE MOST IMPORTANT HEADLINE NEWS OF THE DAY.

4. IT SHOULD BE KEPT CLEARLY IN MIND THAT SO LONG AS VOA CARRIES ITS CURRENT NAME AND IS AN INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE US GOVERNMENT, ITS REPORTING, PARTICULARLY THAT WITHOUT ATTRIBUTION TO MEDIA SOURCES, IS CONSIDERED WITH GOOD REASON TO REPRESENT THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE US GOVERNMENT. THIS APPLIES A FORTIORI WHEN THE REPORTS INVOLVE CONFIDENTIAL

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NEGOTIATIONS OR DISCUSSIONS CONDUCTED BY THE US GOVERNMENT ITSELF. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE INFORMED SOVIET OFFICIAL HAS VALID GROUND TO NOTE THE INACCURACIES, THE EXAGGERATED ATTENTION GIVEN TO A RELATIVELY ROUTINE MATTER, AND THE LINKAGE WITH MICROWAVES, WHICH BOTH THEY AND WE KNOW HAS NO BASIS. THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION WILL BE THAT THE USG IS RESORTING TO DELIBERATE EXAGGERATION AND DISTORTION OF PROBLEMS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. WE CAN THINK OF NO CONVINCING ARGUMENT AGAINST SUCH A CONCLUSION, SINCE IT SIMPLY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED THAT VOA IS NOT RESPONSIVE TO FACTUAL GUIDANCE FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

5. IN THE EMBASSY'S VIEW, THIS ABERRATION POINTS TO THE CONTINUING NEED FOR EFFECTIVE LIAISON WITH AND GUIDANCE TO VOA.
TOON

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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